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MEMORANDUM FOR: Mr. Kent B. Crane
Assistant to the Vice President

SUBJECT : Bloc Propaganda Attitudes Toward
the Administration

This is the second installment in reply to your
15 March letter asking about Bloc press and radio
treatment of the Administration. The analysis was

prepared by



Chief
DDI Executive Staff

Attachment



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COMMUNIST PROPAGANDA ATTITUDES TOWARD THE NIXON ADMINISTRATION

Communist propaganda toward the Nixon Administration has followed the basic pattern of that toward other U.S. administrations in the post-Stalin period. Ebbs and flows in the bellicosity of communist rhetoric tend to reflect events and developments--both in international relations and in relations among communist countries. Communist media normally take a wait-and-see attitude for a time following a change of Administration, and this was the case following President Nixon's inauguration. Initially there was not the degree of criticism that had been aimed at President Johnson during the years that U.S. involvement in the Indo-China war was steadily escalating. But criticism of the Administration intensified following the incursion into Cambodia last May and became particularly bellicose with the allied operation in Laos last month.

The communist countries have taken differentiated approaches to this Administration, as to others, that would be expected given their individual circumstances and concerns:

- + The most strident anti-Administration propaganda emanates from the militantly anti-U.S. small powers of North Vietnam, North Korea, and Cuba.
- + The countries in the Soviet bloc--Poland, East Germany, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Bulgaria, and Outer Mongolia--subordinate their propaganda lines to Moscow's leads, professing dedication to peaceful coexistence and attacking the Administration in varying degrees for allegedly blocking settlement of disputes through negotiations.
- + Romania and Yugoslavia have been the most moderate in responding to the Administration, expressing their disagreement regarding a variety of international issues while pleading for an improved atmosphere of detente and sparing the President personal vilification.
- + Peking, with the clamorous support of Tirana, has derided the Administration as pursuing the aggressive policies of its predecessors at a time when American power and prestige are waning.

The approaches of the two major communist powers are defined more fully on the following pages.

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MOSCOW

Soviet propaganda on the Nixon Administration and its policies has followed the basic pattern of propaganda on the United States in recent years. However, President Nixon has for the most part been spared the personal attacks which had been aimed at President Johnson more frequently as the war in Vietnam intensified.

Moscow's criticism of the Nixon Administration reached new heights, however, in the 25 February Soviet Government statement on the Laos operation. Reviving a theme during the Johnson Administration, the statement warned that the operation could affect U.S.-Soviet relations. Moscow had stopped short of this last May, when the Soviet Government statement on the Cambodian incursion had complained that the operation complicated the international situation. At a press conference following the reading of that statement, Kosygin stated that mutual trust was being undercut.

Overall characterizations of U.S. policy are basically unaltered. Thus Washington remains the "aggressor" in Indochina, the "chief accomplice" of the Israelis in the Middle East, the "opponent" of European security, and the "main perpetrator" of the arms race. These characterizations will, it may be assumed, be repeated at the 24th Congress of the CPSU, just as they have been at other gatherings calculated to present a show of communist unity in the face of "imperialism." But on sensitive issues under negotiation--particularly strategic arms limitation and a Berlin settlement--Moscow largely avoids substantive comment, generally confining itself to complaints about U.S. sincerity.

As it has done in the past, during the Nixon Administration and before, Moscow's propaganda plays up such exploitable events as the Angela Davis case and the dumping last August of stocks of nerve gas in the Atlantic. Not unexpectedly, Moscow media have decried the recent actions of the Jewish Defense League and alleged that the League was operating with the "connivance" of the U.S. Government.

PEKING

Peking has sought to capitalize on every opportunity to denigrate the Administration and its policies, consistently portraying the United States as a declining power whose aggressive designs exceed its capability at a time of revolutionary ferment at home and abroad. A recurrent theme is that the present Administration essentially follows the lines of its predecessors since World War II, with an implication that any appearances of new policy direction--such as the Nixon Doctrine--are either tricks or masks to cover the erosion of U.S. strength.

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Peking has largely ignored the Administration's call for a relaxation of tensions and has not mentioned the unilateral steps taken in this direction. The PRC had been more explicitly hostile to statements by the Johnson Administration expressing hope for movement in U.S. relations with mainland China. After President Nixon's election Peking called for resumption of the Sino-U.S. talks in Warsaw. Peking's comment at the time was noncommittal on substantive bilateral issues while warning the new Administration not to pursue Soviet-U.S. cooperation at the expense of other interests. After Peking canceled the Warsaw session scheduled for 20 February 1969, and during the ensuing period of acute Sino-Soviet border tensions, the propaganda projected a siege mentality which viewed Peking's two major rivals, the United States and the Soviet Union, as colluding in efforts to "encircle" the PRC.

After the opening of Sino-Soviet border talks in October 1969, Peking put greater emphasis on conflicting elements in the Soviet-American relationship and less on charges of Soviet-U.S. collusion. The Warsaw talks were resumed, running parallel to the Sino-Soviet border negotiations. The Chinese later postponed a session of the Warsaw talks scheduled for 20 May 1970 in reaction to the incursion into Cambodia, but their announcement carefully left the door open for future meetings.

Since the Cambodian operation Peking has focused its propaganda attacks on the United States in seeking to capitalize on anti-U.S. sentiment in a wide variety of contexts. Mao's 20 May 1970 anti-U.S. statement, with its dictum that "revolution is the main trend today," set the theme for a propaganda line picturing the Administration as a helpless giant besieged by revolutionary storms at home and abroad and lashing out in vain fury. Considerable attention has been devoted to domestic unrest in the United States, with Peking's propagandists seizing on protest movements ranging from the peace movement to women's liberation to draw a picture of a surging revolutionary tide that will sweep away the capitalist system.

On balance, taking into account the impact of events and Peking's eagerness to exploit anti-U.S. themes, Peking's treatment of the Administration since the Cambodian operation suggests an intent to defer basic Sino-U.S. questions for the duration of major U.S. involvement in Indochina. Moreover, Peking has authoritatively declared that any real movement in bilateral relations will be contingent on progress on the Taiwan question, and in the meantime it is vigorously pursuing diplomatic and propaganda efforts to enhance its standing within the world community while isolating the Nationalist Chinese regime.

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